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# A Second Helping

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## Chapter 1 by SaintSayaka

You let your tongue trail over the pasta that sits at the end of your fork. Delicious, as always. And it's as good as it'll ever get.

The fridge still sits open. You wonder what your mother looked like when she was filling it with her last meal. Tired, from the sickness? In pain? Or was cooking a means of escape from all of that?

You desperately wished that you had eaten more of her food without a problem as a kid when you got the chance to. And now, all that's left to remind you that you had a mom is the necklace around your neck and the fork in your hand. Everything in the house has been packed away, waiting for the Goodwill truck in the morning.

You think you'll have the meatloaf next.

## Chapter 2 by Avianna



Savoring the remaining pieces of the pasta, you set the fork down and walk over to the fridge.

Peering into the fridge, your eyes scan the shelves until you spot the meatloaf. Smiling, you reach in and take out the dish and

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*You were playing in the school playground. It was.. third grade. The teacher called to eat lunch. You opened your tiffin and, the smell of meatloaf filled the air. All the kids turned towards and drooled at the sight. Your best friend, Lucy, immediately snatched your tiffin and began running around. You shouted at her to return it, but inside you were happy that she found your food more tasty.*

The most painful thing, as you taste the meatloaf, is the thought that the more you enjoy it, the less it will remain. And then, there would be none left.

Like the way your mom went away.

She had never let her pain show. Which was a bad thing, since she detected her disease late. It had half consumed her.

And now she was gone.

She is making her last meal before visiting the hospital. Little did you know she will be comatose after ten. hours. That she would never return home.

Your meatloaf is half over.

#### Chapter 4 by SaintSayaka



Your brother was never a big fan of your mother's meatloaf, which is why you decided to give him the cake. He's been working on a single piece for about an hour now, a dedication you envy. The two of you have been quiet. It's the first time you've seen each other in about three years - since the divorce, you quietly note - and this hasn't exactly been the optimal reunion. Frowning, you dig your fork back into your meal. A part of you wishes that you had the fridge to yourself. You immediately dismiss the thought, knowing how much it would disappoint your mom.

At least the quiet has given you opportune time to savor what's left of her.

#### Chapter 5 by Vernie



You lift the last bite of meatloaf to your mouth, watching as the fork travels to your quivering lips. As you begrudgingly swallow, you feel a tear in your cheek. The tears become more rapid, one after the other, and your hair surrounds your distraught face.

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"Mom," you think to yourself, "why did you have to hide your pain? You wanted to protect us, but all you did was cause more pain. Why?"

This could have been stopped. If only she had said something.

No. Regrets weren't an option. You remember it wasn't your mom's fault. It was the cancer.

Nothing could stop your sobs. They littered the floor, reddened your face, and brought back a surge of memories more painful than the last.

Your brother walks in, witnessing your fit of passion.

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